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DENVER DAN, JR., AND THE RENEGADE.

By "NONAME."



In a second a savage had sprung upon him from behind and tore his rifle from his grasp. The boy had one hand free, however, and as quickly as thought he drew it and emptied its chambers among the crowd. There were shrieks and yells, the sound of a heavy body falling to the ground, the air being thick with smoke.

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DENVER DAN, JR.,

AND THE RENEGADE.

By "NONAME."

Author of "The Silent Band," "The League of Fate," "Denver Dan and His Mystic Band," "Denver Dan and the Road Agents," "Denver Dan and the Counterfeiters," "Denver Dan Outwitted," "Denver Dan the Sheriff," "Denver Dan's Peril," "Denver Dan to the Rescue," "Denver Dan and his Chums," "Denver Dan in New York," "Denver Dan Jr., and His Band of Deadshots," etc., etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

THE EXPEDITION.

"BOYS, suppose we take a run up into Montana and see what we can find. I hear that there's lots of villainy going on among the Indians and the rascally agents who set them on, and if so, we've got to take a hand in and wipe it out, show 'em that such rascality has got to be stopped."

"A good plan, Dan, old fellow, and I do not believe that there is one among the Deadshots who will oppose it."

"Not one!" came the unanimous answer from a score of young throats.

Denver Dan, Jr., had spoken the words above quoted to his lieutenant and chum, Harry Everett, and the Deadshots themselves, to whom the reader needs no introduction, had attested to the truth of Harry's words in reply.

"Then it is settled," said Dan quietly. "When will you be ready to start away?"

"At once, if you say so," answered Tom Holcraft, the son of that brave Mike Holcraft who had belonged to the famous Mystic Band of Denver Dan, and whose brave deeds had gained him the love and confidence of the renowned vigilante.

"Not quite so fast as that, Tom," spoke up young Allan Anderson, a nephew of Sandy Davidson, a former member of Denver Dan's band, a cousin to Archie Davidson, Sandy's son, who was one of the Deadshots, and had induced Allan to join.

"We'll say to-morrow," said young Dan. "Let all be here, in the saddle, armed and equipped, as the sun rises, so that there may be no delay in starting."

"We'll be here!" cried they all, and then they dispersed to their several homes, all living in Denver at present, though some were only sojourning there, as it might be, their residences being in different parts of the West.

One of the Deadshots was young Fritz Flaxman, son of Tony Flaxman, the proprietor of the Parlor Wine Rooms, an old settler, and well known to Dan, having had much assistance from the latter.

Then there were, besides Charlie Martin, Dick Travis, George Barstow and Joe Horton, already mentioned in the preceding story relating to the adventures of young Dan, many boys, relatives of members of Denver Dan's band, some of them and some not.

There were Jack Dunn, Phil Wright, Nat Noble, Arthur Harrison, Donald Ferguson, Walter Donaldson, Rob Remington, and many others whose names will appear from time to time, the band numbering something over twenty members.

The boys had made their power felt among the lawless bands which even at this time infested certain parts of the State, but Dan had a notion of taking a trip beyond the boundaries in which he had worked thus far, and this conference was the result.

The next day the band set out, mounted upon their fleet-footed ponies, and carrying just enough provisions to last them until they should find game, for they did not intend to be loaded down with any extra luggage while upon an expedition of this character.

We will not stop to describe the journey into Montana, but will let it suffice to say that they reached the Territory without incident, and at once struck for that part of it usually frequented by wandering tribes of Indians, and by rascally traders, road-agents, and outlaws of every description.

In the course of two days they came upon an isolated house in the mountains, where lived an old fellow who had been a miner and trader, but now simply lived on as quietly as possible.

When he saw the boys come riding up he ran into the house, and presently appeared at an upper window armed with a rifle.

"I'll shoot the first one on ye that tries to git in," he cried. "I ain't got no money, so it's no use of your trying to come in. Clear away or I'll pepper some on ye."

"Hold up, my friend!" cried Dan; "we are not outlaws, as you seem to think."

"Don't tell me! What do ye go ridin' around the country in a body for if ye're honest boys?"

"To hunt down the lawless bands which infest these regions."

"Shol who are ye, anyhow?"

"I am Denver Dan, Jr., and these young gentlemen are the Deadshots."

"What! you the son of Dan Fleming, of Denver, what used to be the sheriff, and lately went to York to live?"

"The same; so you need have no fear, for we do not war upon honest folk. Come down, for you may be able to give us some information. We are on the look out for a renegade that has been committing all sorts of atrocities."

"Then I'm just the man ye want to see. Is it Wolf Heart ye want?"

"Who is he?"

"A thunderin' thief of a white man what's jined the Injuns. Him and Dick Skimp, the Injun-agent, is the two biggest rascals in the Territory."

"Where will we find 'em?"

"Not more'n fifty miles further on, and perhaps nearer. The Injuns ain't been cuttin' much lately, but they's a lot o' road-agents and hoss-thieves that tackles every emigrant train or coach what goes through, and this Wolf Heart is generally ready to help 'em."

"What is his real name?"

"I couldn't tell ye that, but ye'll know him, for when he's on the war-path he allus carries a long stick with a flamin' red flag onto it. They say he dyed it in white men's blood."

"We must seek this villain, capture or slay him."

"Ketch him if you can, and have him strung up; but as for the Injuns and Greasers and cut-throats he has with him, shoot 'em down on sight."

"We shall certainly do so. Good-day, Mr. —"

"I ain't no mister. I'm only plain Tom Griggs, miner and trapper, and used to be stage-driver, but I ain't doin' nothin' now 'cept livin' here quiet. Don't tell these cusses I give 'em away, for if ye do they'll tear the shanty down about my ears."

"When we get through with these gentlemen there won't be enough of them left to give you any trouble, Mr. Griggs."

"Tell ye I ain't no mister. Do ye take me for a gambler? All honest men in these parts goes by their front names wi'out any handles to 'em. It's on'y plain Tom, Jack, or Bill, or maybe Old Griggs, or Fatty Smith, or Lane-legged Ferguson, or some sich. Honest men drop the mister out hyar."

"All right, honest Tom Griggs; no offense to you. Now we're off, and much obliged to you for your information."

"Ye're welcome to it, an' if ye red the country o' them vermin ye'll be doin' honest folks a sarvice. Good luck to ye lads, and if ye do happen to come back this way, just stop and let me know what success ye've hed."

"We will certainly do so. Mis—I beg your pardon, Old Griggs."

"That's more like it. Good-bye, boys, and good luck to ye."

Then the old hermit stuck his head in, and the Deadshots rode away on their errand of vengeance.

CHAPTER II.

THE DEADSHOTS ENCOUNTER THE RENEGADE.

Two days after that, along in the afternoon, Dan and his band were passing through a small wooded belt, when they suddenly heard cries and yells ahead of them.

Then came the report of fire-arms, accompanied by groans and shrieks.

"There is trouble ahead!" cried Dan. "Let us see what it is."

They put spurs to their spunky little steeds and dashed forward, soon clearing the belt of woodland.

Then they came in sight of a lonely cabin, in front of which were a score of Indians and outlaws yelling like so many demons.

A brisk fire was being interchanged between them and the occupants of the house, some of whom had evidently been overtaken before they could get under cover, as two or three dead bodies lay just beyond the door-step.

What first and most attracted Dan's attention was the blood-red pennon which, attached to a tall, thin staff, carried by one of the riders, floated over the assailing party.

"The renegade himself!" muttered the lad.

"Shoot down the accursed signal!" cried Arthur Harrison, who was riding close behind Dan.

"Let us make a sudden dash on them!" added Fred Farrington, another of the band.

"Forward!"

This command, given by Dan in shrill, clear tones, rang out above all the noise and tumult, and with a cheer the brave boys urged their little animals toward the house.

Dan blew a shrill blast upon the silver trumpet he carried at his belt, and like a whirlwind the band rushed onward.

"Fire!"

Bang, bang, bang!

Crack, crack!

Crack!

Whizz!

Thud!

The Deadshots opened fire upon the marauders as soon as the order was given.

For several moments the rattle of fire-arms was almost incessant, the bullets whizzing and singing through the air in the most unpleasant fashion.

Then several horses were seen to roll over upon the ground, crushing their riders beneath them, while here and there a horse without a rider might be seen dashing away unchecked, seeking to escape from the dreadful confusion and terror of the scene.

At the first fire the renegade and his followers were so stunned and surprised that they seemed powerless to act.

The attack was so totally unexpected that had the Deadshots suddenly dropped down from the clouds into their midst, they could not have been more astonished.

"Who in the fiend's name are these!" cried the renegade in surprise.

Young Allan, Archie's cousin, gave a sudden start at the sound and flushed crimson, but quickly recovering his composure, muttered within himself:

"No, no, it cannot be; the man is not living, and this is but my fancy."

"Who are we?" yelled Dan. "Who are we, boys?"

"The Deadshots, sworn to exterminate all outlaws."

"And I am the son of Denver Dan, the terror of evil-doers. Forward, my brave lads."

The men besieged in the hut set up a tremendous shout at hearing this, and poured in a fresh volley upon the outlaws.

The renegade swore a horrible oath, and commanded his men to sweep the new-comers out of existence.

They were not to be swept, however, being bent upon doing some of that sort of business themselves.

Armed with repeating rifles, they were equal in strength to four times the numbers opposed to them.

"Fire!" yelled Dan, "and keep firing until there is not one of this marauding band left!"

At the first fire the staff bearing the red pennon was cut in two by a flying bullet, and the sanguinary ensign fell to the ground, and was trampled in the dust.

The instant the outlaws saw it gone they uttered a yell and scattered in every direction.

The Indians went one way, the whites another, and in the confusion and under cover of the dust and smoke it could not be seen which way the renegade had betaken himself.

"We've scattered them for one while," remarked Dick, "and their band is somewhat less than it was before we came along."

"The leader has got away, though," added Frank, "and he was the very one we wanted most to get rid of."

"At all events," declared Dan, "we are now in the enemy's country, and whenever we meet any strangers that cannot or will not give a satisfactory account of themselves, off they go, dangling at the end of a cord and dancing upon nothing."

"Bully for you," cried one of the men, coming from the house; "if we had a hundred such fellows as you out here in the mountains there wouldn't a cussed renegade road-agent or hoss-thief dare to show his ugly mug within a thousand miles."

"Are the Indians on the war-path?" asked Archie.

"No, but this bloody-handed pirate of the plains is always cutting up rough. It would be a good thing if some on us had hit him and settled his hash for all time."

"Does the rascal make his head-quarters about here?"

"Wall, they's a camp of 'em in a ravine or gully about two mile from here, but no one knows exactly where it is, or they'd have been cleaned out long ago. Of course, we ain't going to 'low the Injuns to have reg'lar villages outside o' the reservation, but this one is so hidden that no one knows precisely where it is, and yet we're sure it ain't fur away."

"And the renegade lives there?"

"He and the Injuns, the Greasers and other fellers lives in the Bloody Gulch, but that's a wuss place to get into than t'other, though we all knows where it is."

"Depend upon it, my man, we'll unearth the scoundrels

yet, drive them from their holes and rid the country of such rubbish. Now, boys, forward!"

CHAPTER III.

A STRANGE CAPTURE.

AWAY rode the boys, but saw nothing of the renegade or his band during the afternoon.

It lacked about an hour of sunset when they came to a place where they decided to pitch their camp.

This was on the edge of a wood, the back of the camp being a rocky hedge, part of which overhung so as to form a sort of cave.

There was a recess some fifteen feet deep and twice as wide, the sides advancing so as to make the place nearly semi-circular, and afforded some shelter from the night air if nothing else.

There was a stream of water not far away, and as there was an abundance of stable room for the ponies, the place just suited the boys.

"We must find where this fellow's place is, first of all," said Dan. "I wish those men had known more about it."

"We might tempt them to come out into the open and fight us," remarked Allan. "Then we could pick them off, and after a while the others would leave the country."

"So that we would have to chase them elsewhere," put in Dick. "No; we had better make a square job of it and clean the whole gang out, once for all."

"I'll see to that," muttered Dan, half to himself, as he went into the cave, with something which he had taken from his saddle-bags in his hand.

While some were engaged in getting wood for a fire, others in leading the ponies to drink, others in picketing the neighborhood, and still others in looking out for supplies for the table, young Dan was seated on the rocks in the rear of the cavern, busily engaged in fixing something, which Harry, his only companion, was greatly puzzled at.

"What's that?" he asked, Dan seeming to have a cannon-ball in his hand.

"Something to make trouble among the red-skins."

"But what is it?" Dan now unwrapping a thick tar paper from the puzzling object.

"That's what it is," was the answer, Dan presently removing the wrapper and holding up what seemed like a glass ball, though it did not shine brightly enough for glass.

"A shell?"

"Scarcely."

Before Harry could ask any more questions, some of the boys returned, and Dan going to one side put the strange object away in a safe place among the rocks.

"Have you seen anybody?" asked Dan, as Archie and Flaxman entered.

"Not a soul. The horses are all right, and we don't think it 'll be much use to keep a guard outside of the rocks."

"No, for it will be easy enough to hear the approach of an enemy, and then the fires will be lighted."

"Who went after provisions?" asked Phil.

"Allan, Arthur and Farrington in one party, and Frank, Tom, Charlie and Dick in the other."

"Where are the others?" for the second named party had all returned.

"Oh, I suppose they will be back in a little while."

Charlie and his party had secured enough to make a good meal, taken with what they already had in hand, and Fritz Flaxman, who was the head-cook for the expedition, at once set about getting ready the evening meal.

He raked together the fire and got a bed of glowing coals, over which he was preparing to roast two or three brace of fat rabbits, when he suddenly uttered an expression of surprise.

"Py Shinks! vot vos dose?"

At the same moment the boys heard the report of fire-arms in the distance.

It was clearly something more than the bringing down of game, for the shots were fired thick and fast, and in a certain manner which told Dan that there was trouble going on somewhere.

"The boys have met some enemy," he cried, springing to his feet.

"Ha! three shots in succession from one piece," cried Harry. "That is the signal that was agreed upon."

A dozen of the Deadshots, Dan at the head, quickly sprang into the saddle and dashed out upon the plain.

Two of their comrades presently appeared from behind a knoll, but, when the two parties came nearer, it was seen that one of the young hunters was missing.

"Where is Allan?"

"Carried away in the most mysterious manner," said Fred.

"By the renegade?"

"That we don't know, for we couldn't make him out plain enough."

"How did it happen?"

"We were hunting for some wild turkeys, which we had heard calling to each other, when we suddenly came upon the entrance to a deep and precipitous gulch.

"Allan was in advance, when we saw him all at once grapple with a man, but where he came from we couldn't tell.

"We fired several shots as a signal, as well as to disable Allan's captor, but were afraid of hitting the wrong one.

"Suddenly both Allan and the man disappeared, and several shots were fired at us from somewhere, but where it was difficult to tell.

"We left the place in a hurry and gave the signal again, and then made all haste back so as to give the alarm, and not be captured ourselves."

"I am glad you escaped, for otherwise we would not have known where to look for Allan. Believe me, we will rescue him yet."

CHAPTER IV.

ALLAN IS MADE A PRISONER.

WHEN the little party, consisting of Allan and his two friends, were out looking for the wherewithal to replenish their larder, a small party of armed men were watching their movements from behind a small knoll composed of rocks and thick bushes.

"There's one of the band," said one of the men, "and we must capture him."

"We could pick the whole crowd off as easily as anything," added another.

"You must not do that. Do you decoy them into the gulch, and I will be ready to seize the one I want. Then you can do as you please with the others."

The leader then moved cautiously off, worming his way through the tall grass and underbrush like a snake.

Presently the cry of a wild turkey was heard, and the boys, who had done as well as they desired, decided to go in pursuit of the toothsome game.

The answering cry of the mate was heard, and presently, as the boys advanced, they could see what seemed to be the spread tail of one of the birds moving about in the grass.

Then they lost it again, although they could hear the cries, and following them up presently entered a strip of woodland.

Into this they penetrated, and Allan, who was several yards in advance, was about to draw bead upon the turkey, or what he supposed to be such, when a lithe form sprang suddenly up from behind a fallen log, and seized him.

The man did not seem to be an Indian, but in his excitement, and owing to the obscurity, he could not very well make out what he was.

He struggled to escape, but the man held him firmly in his arms, pressing his own so close to his side as to make it impossible to use or free them.

He called to his companions to fire, and they did so, the fire being returned from some point at one side.

Allan had his feet free and tried to use them, but he was suddenly lifted from the ground and felt himself flying through space at a rapid rate.

When he alighted he found himself at the bottom of a gully, surrounded by half a dozen savage-looking Indians.

He was now free, and he threw his rifle to his shoulder in an instant and banged away.

The bullet whizzed through one of the Indians' topknot, carrying it away, but doing no other damage, owing to Allan's having slipped just at the moment of firing.

In a second a savage had sprung upon him from behind and tore his rifle from his grasp.

The boy had one hand free, however, and as quickly as thought he drew it and emptied its chambers among the crowd.

Crack—crack!

Crack—crack!

Crack!

Crack!

There were shrieks and yells, the sound of a heavy body falling to the ground, the air being thick with smoke.

The boy could see one stalwart warrior stretched out upon the sward, and then suddenly breaking away he dashed along the gully.

After him came the savages in full cry, though no fire-arms were discharged.

It seemed to be the intention of his enemies to capture him alive, but Allan resolved to cheat them, if that were possible.

He sped down the path, but suddenly came upon a high ledge of rocks, over which a waterfall tumbled and spat-

tered, making a tremendous roar and din, and drowning the cries of the leader of the party, who had issued some commands respecting the lad.

Allan came upon the fall so suddenly that he had not time to stop or alter his course.

In a moment he had plunged head-first into it, the water covering him from head to foot.

He closed his eyes, but to his astonishment seemed falling a terrible distance, and yet he knew that the rock must be close behind the sheet of water.

Presently, however, he fell upon his face, and finding that he was not wet, opened his eyes, sprang to his feet, and looked about him.

The waterfall had been but a masking to a cavity in the rocks through which he had fallen, and before him he saw a number of Indian huts, and a pleasing landscape shut in by high hills on all sides, while overhead, through the waving branches of trees, he could see the blue sky.

It was all so marvelous that the boy could hardly believe his senses.

He stood lost in wonder, gazing upon the scene spread out before him, and did not hear the stealthy step behind him.

Neither did he see the figure of the leader of the band of Indians and outlaws—the treacherous renegade himself.

Suddenly a hand was placed across his mouth and a pungent odor assailed his nostrils.

He gasped for breath, tried to turn about, but suddenly losing all power and control of his limbs, sank, exhausted and unconscious, upon the sward at his feet.

Then the man, with a mocking laugh and a leer upon his sinister countenance, lifted him in his arms and bore him away toward one of the lodges, the boy lying in his arms as helpless as an infant.

CHAPTER V.

PREPARATIONS FOR A RESCUE.

"POOR Allan!" murmured Dan, as they sat around the fire that night, their ponies being tethered not far away.

"We must rescue him," said Phil, "and at once."

"If we only knew where to look for him," added Harry.

"We can hunt for him," put in Charlie, "and at any rate punish this renegade."

"Did it ever occur to any of you," asked Dan, "that Allan might have been captured by the renegade himself?"

"To be sure," replied Joe Horton. "He knows that we are after him, and has captured one of our men in order to frighten us."

"He might kill the poor fellow," muttered Archie, "and send us his head or his ears, or something of that sort."

"You have a mighty pleasant way of talking, I must say," put in Phil. "Can't you think of anything more agreeable to speak about than that?"

"It's no more than just what this brute is capable of doing," interposed young Darrell.

"So help me Shiminies, I not like me dot peezness," spoke up Fritz. "Dot don't was a resbecdable vay auf doing dings. Auf I catch dot veller I just tol' him so."

"Boys," cried Dan, suddenly, "I'm going to hunt for Allan. Who will go with me?"

A dozen of the Deadshots answered in an instant.

The rest were not far behind, not one of them but what was ready to go, though some were slower than others in answering.

"Well, we mustn't all go," said Dan, with a laugh. "I think you'll have to draw lots. I, of course, shall head the expedition."

"If we can't all go," interposed Archie, "don't leave out Harry, Charlie, George, or Dick, for they're the best men we've got."

"What do you say to this proposition of Archie's, boys?"

"Agreed!" cried all the rest, the boys indicated, of course, saying nothing.

"That will make five men, and I want two more."

"Take Archie himself," whispered Harry to Dan. "He's a good fellow and as brave as a lion."

Low as Harry had spoken young Davidson had caught the drift of the words, and blushing to his eyes he cried out:

"Oh, I say now, don't take me, or the boys will think I was fishing for the chance all along."

"Nonsense," cried Joe Horton, "anybody that knows you would never think that."

"Do you want to go?" asked Dan.

"Do I want to? I should say I did, but you want only the best men, and I am not such a——"

Several of the others interrupted him with cries of:

"That's too thin, Archie! You're as good as any of us."

"I think so myself," declared Dan, "and I'm going to take you along."

"Ask the other fellows first."

"What do you say, boys?"

"Take him with you, Dan," cried they all.

"All right, then, and that leaves but one man to chose. Who shall it be?"

"Joe Horton," cried Charlie and Dick.

"Phil Wright," answered George and Harry.

"Frank Darrell!" cried two or three.

"Tom Holcraft!" shouted the rest.

"There are candidates enough," laughed Dan; "which one shall I take?"

"Take Frank," cried the other three before the young fellow could speak.

"Very well, I will do so, and that makes all that I shall need. Tom, you may take command of the camp while I am gone."

"You can rely on me, Dan."

"Now, then, boys, to get ready for the journey."

"Hush!" cried Phil, suddenly.

A crackling was heard in the bushes just outside the camp.

In an instant every boy's weapon was in his hand.

"Who goes there?"

The command came from Dan, who advanced a few steps and peered into the darkness.

"Fear not," cried a voice, "I am your friend."

"Advance then, where we can see you."

The figure came forward into the light, and proved to be that of an Indian girl, remarkably pretty and not more than seventeen years of age.

She was totally unaccompanied, and seemed to be unarmed; and, at any rate, there was nothing in her manner

which would arouse any suspicion as to an intention to play them false.

"Who are you?" asked Dan.

"The Gazelle. My home is with the warriors of the Sioux, but I come to give the young Deadshot warning."

"Perhaps she knows where Allan is?" suggested Harry, aside, to Dan.

"Do you know aught of one of our comrades, who has been, I fear, carried away by the savages?"

"He is in the power of the Wolf Heart, he whom you call the 'renegade.'"

"I feared as much," put in Charlie.

"Does the villain contemplate holding him a prisoner, or does he mean to slay the youth?"

"He will not kill him, but he seeks to make him betray you and some of your band into the power of our tribe. He seeks only your life and one or two others."

"And you have come to warn me of this?"

"Partly, and also to tell you that a party of our warriors, aided by a number of Mexican bandits, lawless men from your own land, and some road-agents and cut-throats, are even now advancing toward your camp with the intention of sweeping you from the earth."

"Is the renegade with the party?"

"He may be."

"How far away are they now?"

"Another hour would bring them upon you."

"Ah!"

"You will avoid them—you will leave this place?"

"No; I will stay. Deadshots, be prepared to charge these villains. When I am ready I will give the word to mount."

Then Dan took from his knapsack the dark, spherical mass which Harry had seen him handling the day before, and unscrewing a plug at the top, poured some dark, thick liquid into it, closed the vent, and placed it in a crevice among the rocks.

"You've got that thing out again, have you?" asked Harry.

"Yes," was the reply, and that was all that was said on the subject at that time.

The Indian girl, after vainly endeavoring to persuade the boys to leave their camp, fearing that it would afford them but a scanty shelter against the attacks of the Indians, withdrew, promising to learn all she was able concerning Allan and his probable fate.

Dan would have liked to have her remain, not that he feared any treachery on her part, but for her own safety, but the girl preferred to go at once, and she was allowed to have her own way.

After she had been gone over half an hour, having taken a different direction from that in which the enemy was expected, Dan rode out a short distance upon the plain and listened attentively.

It was not long before he could distinguish the tramp of horses, and then riding back, he made the fire blaze up brighter, so as to show the foe that he and his band were expecting them.

On they came, nearer and nearer, and presently they began to utter savage yells, as they imagined how easy a prey the band of Deadshots would be when opposed to their

greater numbers, little knowing of the surprise which awaited them.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BANDITS ARE SURPRISED.

"Now," said young Dan, presently, in a whisper, "when these villains approach near enough, follow me. You will see what a scattering I will give them."

Then from a hole in the rocks, where he had placed it previously, he took the spherical ball which had so puzzled Harry, and held it carefully in his hand.

"What is it, Dan—a hand grenade?"

"No, not exactly."

"A bomb?"

"Well, not that either."

"Then what is it?"

"Wait a minute."

The outlaws, renegades and Indians were sweeping toward the cave at full gallop, and evidently thought that they held the boys in their grasp, and that there was no escape.

The cave could be easily entered, being in part open upon two sides, the overhanging ledge and the front wall being all that made it a cave at all.

The enemy came sweeping down, and Dan, bidding all the boys mount their ponies, suddenly dashed out upon the star-lit plain.

Then he suddenly raised his hand and hurled the round object straight into the air.

It went up with a hiss, and as it rose seemed to glow like a flame, growing redder and redder every instant.

Then it became white, and suddenly there was a loud report, and a ball of white hot fire went sweeping downward through the air right toward the band of outlaws and savages.

It expanded until it was as large as one's body, the center seeming to revolve within the outward strata of flame, gas and smoke.

It whizzed through the air, sending out separate balls of fire with reports like pistol shots, together with a cloud of vapor, which would every now and then ignite and float away in luminous clouds.

The outlaws were paralyzed with fear, and turning their horses' heads fled in the wildest terror.

Swiftly as they sped away on their fleet-footed steeds the whirling, growing, leaping ball of fire followed steadily on like an avenging demon whose course was not to be stayed.

The pitchy black darkness seemed to grow more profoundly black as the fearful thing passed through its light, as it hovered just in the rear of the party of ruffians, illumined the forms of horses and riders, and revealed the terror-stricken faces of the miscreants in a wonderful degree.

Over the plains they thundered, but the dreadful object followed easily, hovering as it were, just behind them as though in no hurry to pass.

Now and then one of the wretches would throw up his hands and reel from the saddle as one of the balls shot out from the center of the white hot mass would reach a vital part.

"Sometimes a horse would be struck, and as he plunged forward in the rank grass his rider would be hurled headlong, only to be trampled to death by the maddened steeds of his comrades.

"What is it?" asked Harry again. "Greek fire?"

Something like that. Its rapid passage through the air ignited it, and caused the chemicals inside to expand and explode."

"But there are bullets in it."

"Yes, and in that it is like grape-shot. The coating was something like grass, but though a non-conductor, you saw that I did not allow my hand to heat it very much. It would have been too dangerous."

"But see, it floats through the air without falling, and yet it must be heavy."

"Its motion keeps it up. Once that ceases it will fall. Then, too, the wind is favorable."

For a long time they could see the glowing mass like a meteor in the sky, and then gradually it grew dimmer and dimmer, and at last went out, but by this time the outlaws with their savage allies were so far away, that there was no further danger to be apprehended from them.

"Now," said Dan, "to pursue our march and hunt down this villain. It is well for him that he did not join his band in this expedition."

Through the rest of the night they rode, and at daybreak encamped on the borders of an elevated plateau, through which ran a purling stream on the banks of which grew several clumps of trees.

They had not done with the band, although the Mexicans had been frightened away, and they would now have nothing to fear except from the savages and their renegade leader.

After a rest of several hours, Dan started off at the head of his band, and had traveled fully two hours, when from out a rocky pass, a mile or so ahead of them, issued a large band of horsemen.

There could be no doubt that they were the Indians, or a part of the band, and Dan gave orders to prepare for them at once.

As they came nearer their identity was plain, but the blood-red pennon of the chief was lacking, and Dan felt another pang of disappointment.

CHAPTER VII.

ANOTHER BRUSH WITH THE ENEMY.

"Hold your own, Deadshots!" presently cried our hero, as the Indians dashed forward. "Form in a solid body, and we can stand against twice this number of howling savages."

The band then quickly arranged itself in the form of a triangle, one point being toward the savages and the base being left open.

Dan's figure formed the apex of the triangle, and thence, two deep on each side, it stretched back far enough to give all a chance to fire to the best advantage, and yet not leave too large a surface exposed.

Nearest to Dan were Harry, Charlie, Archie, Dick Travis and George Barstow, while occupying good positions were Joe Horton, Tom Holcraft, Phil Wright, Jack Dunn and Frank Darrell, the others supporting them upon the ends.

"Now, then!" cried Dan, "stand firm and don't fire till I give the signal."

On came the savages with wild yells, their swift steeds thundering over the plain, a cloud of dust rising over and following behind, and ever and anon the flash of a rifle showing bright and clear from among the mass of dark riders.

The boys stood firm, resolving to wreak a terrible punishment upon the savages for their many past atrocities, and, if possible, to capture the traitorous renegade by whose fell influence they had been induced to make the present raid.

If he were among the number now, he was not to be distinguished, and doubtless he was painted and attired like the rest in order to escape observation, which meant extra danger, as there was not one who would not have tried to pick him off had they been sure which was he.

"Stand firm, my brave lads," whispered Dan as the savages came closer, and paused for an instant when at a distance of about two hundred yards.

The line then spread out, and swooping down upon the Deadshots in the form of a half-circle, the Indians came rushing on, uttering the most fearful and ear-piercing yells.

Well might the sound have daunted stouter hearts than those of the boys, but, relying upon the coolness and courage of their beloved leader, and trusting to him to bear them safely out of their peril, not one of them wavered, but all were resolved to do their utmost.

At the distance of a hundred yards Dan suddenly blew a short, shrill blast upon his silver whistle.

Instantly every rifle was raised to the shoulder.

Crack, crack, crack!

Crack, crack!

Crack!

The shots rattled out in quick succession, with only the slightest interval between each report, many of the rifles being fired simultaneously.

A number of savages in the foremost rank were seen to fall and then the rifles blazed forth again.

Crack, crack, crack, crack!

Crr-r-ack! Crr-rr-ack-ack!

This time the enemy was nearer, and the slaughter was more frightful as a natural consequence.

The boys stood firm in their places, the ponies seeming fixed to the earth, and without cessation the deadly Spencers poured a withering volley upon the still advancing red-skins.

The rattle of the reports was incessant, each rifle being able to shoot sixteen times without reloading, and each boy being provided with a cartridge-belt slung across his breast so as to enable him to reload again with astonishing rapidity.

The savages were evidently dumfounded at the resistance offered by the brave fellows, and, being unable to rein in their steeds, swept by on both sides, hoping to presently return and attack the party in the rear.

Many a savage warrior was picked off as the column swept by, but so compactly were the boys ranged together that, although a perfect hail-storm of bullets flew around them, not one was seriously injured.

The yells of the dusky demons became less fierce, as man after man fell from the saddle and was crushed beneath the feet of the rushing steeds behind, and now a cheer arose from the boys, that proved how undaunted they were in spite of the danger.

The red-skins swept by at last, and then a sudden retrograde movement was observed taking place among them.

"Reform!" cried Dan, wheeling his pony about.

Every one of them did the same thing, and thus there was presented to the Indians the two jaws of a steel-trap, as it were.

"Wheel!" shouted Dan.

The two lines fell back, and by the time the foe began dashing up once more the front of the band of Deadshots was as solid as before.

"Charge!" yelled Dan.

Like the roar of distant thunder sounded the tramp of the sturdy little steeds, who sniffed and snorted as though enjoying nothing better than this exciting kind of life.

"Fire!"

The order rang out clear and distinct above all the tumult, and was instantly obeyed.

It was as though a thunderbolt had suddenly burst upon the savages.

There was a sheet of living flame, a quick, sharp rattle, and then the sound of shrieks, groans and yells, mingled with the terrified neighing of horses and the dull thud of falling bodies.

"Forward!" screamed Dan once more.

The band of Deadshots swept on like a perfect tornado.

"Fire!"

Again and again the rifles belched forth their deadly contents, a score of saddles being emptied before a third volley was fired.

The horses of the Indians became unmanageable, and stampeded, the savages themselves grew disheartened by the terrible slaughter which had been going on among them, and as the brave boys came nearer, and the unerring rifles blazed forth again, they made a fierce break, turned about and scattered in every direction, leaving young Dan and his Dead-shots masters of the field.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RENEGADE AND HIS CAPTIVE.

WHEN Allan came to his senses once more, he found himself lying upon a pile of buffalo-skins in the corner of what seemed to be a commodious lodge, or chief's house, in the Indian village.

He was unbound, but he felt so weak from loss of blood that he doubted his ability to escape and reach the camp of the Deadshots, even had there been no one to pursue and overtake him.

He was watched too, he had no doubt, though he did not investigate matters, caring, for the present, more about rest and ease than looking for escape, being confident that Dan would rescue him as soon as he was missed.

He lay upon his rude couch, therefore, perfectly at ease in body and mind, examining his curious surroundings, and occasionally listening for sounds of activity outside, it being

still day, as he could tell by glimpses of the sky and trees which he could catch through several small openings in the roof.

He was just dropping off into a doze again, from having nothing particular on his mind, when a rustling at one side attracted his attention.

Raising himself upon one elbow, and looking up, he saw an ugly, withered old hag of an Indian woman entering the place, carrying a wooden bowl in her hands.

This she set down in front of the boy, who discovered it to be a not unsavory compound of meat and corn meal, covered with a thick gravy of the meat juices, boiled down and thickened by constant simmering.

A rough wooden spoon or ladle was stuck upright in the middle of this mass, and that was all the means of getting at the food there was, unless one were inclined to use the forks provided by nature, his fingers—as the savages invariably did.

"Eat!" grunted the woman, "Good."

"All right, my beauty," muttered the lad, "but if I'm going to eat I don't want you around, for you'd take away the appetite of the biggest glutton in the country."

The woman went away, but presently returned with a bright tin dipper filled to the brim with clear, sparkling water, which the lad knew was cold from the sweat which formed upon the sides of the vessel.

"I say, now, granny, you're a trump!" he cried seizing the dipper, "and I'll take back what I said about your good looks. You're a perfect Venus, in copper, and here's to your health, you old vixen."

A copious draught of the refreshing fluid seemed to give the boy new vigor, and attacking the food before him, unmindful of the presence of the Indian woman, he quickly made a tolerably good-sized hole in the mass, finding it much more palatable than he had expected.

A piece of dry, hard but sweet meal cake or flapjack, completed his repast, the whole being washed down with another refreshing drink from the tin dipper.

"I think I'll take another snooze now, old lady," he said lightly, throwing himself back upon the rude bed, "but if Dan or any of the boys should come, don't fail to wake me up, for I wish to see them most particularly."

Whether the hag understood him or not, he neither knew nor cared, and as her only reply was a grunt, it was evident that the boy's wit was lost upon her.

Allan feeling sleepy as well as greatly refreshed, got himself into as easy a position as possible, and was soon in a profound slumber, from which he did not awake for some hours, and even then not of his own accord.

When he did awaken, it was because some one had touched him upon the forehead and given him a gentle shake.

"Ugh! get up," said a voice, and raising himself upon one elbow, the lad saw by the light of a blazing torch stuck in the ground at one side of the lodge that his visitor of the morning had returned.

"Well, Moon Eyes, what do you want now?" he asked with a grunt. "By Jove! I thought I was having an ugly dream, and now I know what caused it. One of your smiles is enough to give a fellow the stomach ache."

"Big chief come to see boy 'fore him die!"

"Oh, he is coming to pay me a visit, is he? Coming to tender his last respects, I suppose. Kind of him—very."

"Big white chief, Wolf Heart, come to see boy soon."

"You mean that miserable, sneaking, contemptible renegade, I suppose? He's a nice fellow to call a big chief. Well, if he wants to come, show him in; but if you leave any knives or tomahawks lying around loose, and he gets hurt, don't blame me for it, that's all."

"Ugh! him come see boy now!"

With this the woman retired, and presently a hanging at one side of the lodge was thrown aside and a man of commanding figure entered.

He was white, but was dressed after the fashion of the Indians, his costume being profusely ornamented with heavy beads of shining metal, which glistened with his every movement.

His head was bare, and the long, unkempt black hair swept down his shoulders and clustered about his bronzed throat, exposed to view by reason of the low collar of his hunting shirt being left open.

He carried a rifle in his hand and walked with a firm tread, and with the air of one determined to rule at all hazards, though it were necessary to bring that rifle which he handled so carelessly into frequent use.

Something in that step caused Allan to start visibly, and then he arose to his feet and gazed intently at the man as he came nearer the light.

"Well, you young hound," began the man, "it seems we've captured one of the band that means to exterminate me and all my tribe?"

"Great Heaven!" cried the boy, springing forward.

Seizing the torch from its place, he sprang forward, flared it full in the man's face, and then striking it into the ground again, cried huskily:

"Father! My God! are you this hated being whom we have sworn to sweep from the earth? Are you this infamous renegade?"

"Allan!" cried the man in surprise. "You here! among my enemies!"

"Then you are this villainous——"

"I am Wolf Heart, the renegade, chief of the largest band of savages in the Northwest."

"Then it is true! My God, I had rather you were dead, as has been reported."

"Hem, you don't seem glad to see me after our long separation?"

"I am not. So then, you have gone on in your old evil ways until I find you leagued against your own race at the head of a lawless, merciless band of savages, teaching them, I doubt not, cruelties which they had never imagined could be conceived by the mind of man, waging war on——"

"You can spare me the rest, Allan. I didn't expect to see you out here. You belong to this band of young adventurers, led by the son of Denver Dan, the vigilante. You have come out here to betray you own father, and yet you accuse me of making war upon my own race."

"I came to punish a criminal, not to make war upon my own flesh and blood. I did not know that I should meet you. I thought you were dead. Would to Heaven you were!"

"Look here," said the man, who was indeed Allan Anderson's missing father, the former associate of Denver Dan, now a treacherous renegade, warring upon his own people, "there's no use in your going on at this rate. We might as well have an understanding at once."

"An understanding?"

"Yes. Is Archie Davidson in your party?"

"Yes."

"And Dan leads it?"

"Yes."

"Now, I'll tell you what I'll do. Blood is thicker than water, of course, and if you'll deliver young Dan into my hands, you and your cousin Archie will be allowed to go free, to remain here with me or return to your homes, just as you like."

"You wish me to betray young Denver Dan into the hands of you and your band of bloody-handed outlaws, savages and renegades?"

"You will be permitted to escape. You can find the camp of your friends, or be found by them. Then some night you can drug the watch with something I shall give you, and——"

"Betray my comrades? Never!"

"You would do the same to me if you escaped."

"It is false, and you know it! Bad as you are, renegade and outlaw as you are, you know full well that my hand will never be raised against you."

"If you don't fight with me it must be against me; there can't be any middle ground; it is impossible. Be reasonable and do what I ask. You can go away again after that."

"False-hearted wretch, you give the lie to your own words! No, I will have nothing to do with your hellish schemes!"

"You refuse?"

"Now and forever!"

"Then beware, for by all that's bad I'll sacrifice you as well as the rest!"

Then, with a terrible oath upon his lips, the man strode from the place, leaving the lad alone.

CHAPTER IX.

AN INCIDENT BY THE WAY.

AFTER the defeat of the red-skins young Dan called a halt for the purpose of seeing what damage had been done, and also to take counsel as to their future movements.

None of the Deadshots had been seriously hurt, though some had received wounds, as was natural enough, considering what they had gone through.

Their little steeds were by no means jaded, though somewhat exhausted, to be sure; but Dan proposed that they should leave the open ground and seek shelter nearer the mountains before halting for breakfast.

After a rest in the saddle of about half an hour, therefore, they set out, and reached a pass after an hour's easy ride.

They were about to dismount and look for a place to pitch their camp when they heard the sound of a horse's feet coming down the rocky pathway.

There was but one rider evidently, and so there was nothing to fear, but Dan resolved to be cautious, nevertheless.

He, therefore, gave hasty orders for the boys to conceal themselves, but he had not done so himself when the rider came in sight.

It was no other than old Tom Griggs, who had objected so strongly to having any extra adornments put to his name.

He seemed very much excited, his dress was disordered, his horse reeking with foam, and his appearance one that was calculated to lead one to suppose that something serious was the matter.

"Hello, Tom Griggs—where are you going so fast?" called out Dan.

"Why, bless my gizzards, if it ain't young Dan," cried the old fellow, coming to a pause.

"What's up?"

"You ben't alone, I hope?"

"No. Ahoy! Deadshots!"

At this signal the boys suddenly appeared in full force from out of their places of concealment.

"Good enough," muttered the old fellow. "The road-agents has been out, and when the stage comes by they're going for it hot and heavy."

"And where were you bound so hastily?"

"To give 'em a warnin'. The robbers got wind o' me last night, bursted up my place, and stole every dollar I had, and are now goin' to rob the stage."

"Does it pass through here?"

"Yes, twice a week, and this is the day. She's due in about an hour. Wonder you didn't see it. Which way did ye come—from the east?"

"No; from the south."

"Ah, that's it, then. Well, she'll be here, and them pesky robbers will hide in the middle o' the pass and attack it."

"Where are they now?"

"On the way. They don't know as I'm ahead o' 'em, 'cause I got away last night, picked up this hoss, what some bloody Greaser or prairie pirate left, and made the best of my way down here."

"Well, friend Griggs, you needn't go any further, for we will stay here and wait for the stage, and if these fellows show up we'll make it particularly hot for 'em."

"I'm durned glad I run acrosst ye, for them robbers has got a lot of fellows, and the stage guard, wouldn't be no show against 'em."

"In an hour, you say, the stage is due?"

"Just about, if she ain't late."

"Then we might as well halt here and have our breakfasts."

No sooner said than done, and while three of the Deadshots went some little distance up the pass to keep a lookout for the robbers another party kept watch for the stage.

The pickets were relieved in the course of half an hour, but it was fully an hour after that before it was announced that the stage was in sight.

Archie then came in to say that the robbers had arranged their ambuscade, their movements having compelled

the spies to withdraw to some little distance in order to prevent being discovered.

When the stage arrived at the head of the pass, Dan soon explained the state of affairs, and though at first the driver was somewhat distrustful of him and his band, he at last concluded that it was best to confide in him.

The stage, therefore, continued on its way, the Deadshots riding behind it in a solid body, ready for action at an instant's notice.

When they had gone some little distance a signal from Fred Farrington told them that the road-agents were just ahead of them.

In a few moments, therefore, they were not surprised by the sudden appearance of a large body of masked men who suddenly emerged from some hiding-place, the leader advancing, and calling out, loudly:

"Stop! We have business with this coach."

"So have we business with you!" was the answer.

Then to the surprise of the road-agents, young Dan and his band suddenly dashed out upon them, the driver swerving his horses to one side to allow the boys to ride past.

The Deadshots wasted no time in idle ceremony, but opened fire upon the miscreants in short order.

At the first volley nearly a dozen fell dead or wounded from the saddle.

Then with a wild shout the brave lads swept forward, keeping up a continuous fire and utterly routing the masked marauders in a twinkling.

They broke and fled, but there was no safety in flight, for the merciless band pursued them to their death, and never rested until every one of the wretches had been exterminated.

Then the coach proceeded on its way, while Dan and his band of Deadshots set out once more for the rescue of Allan and the destruction of Wolf Heart, the renegade.

CHAPTER X.

ANOTHER SURPRISE.

THE property of Tom Griggs was found upon the dead bodies of the road-agents, and restored to him, after which he made up his mind to change his long-settled determination to live the life of a hermit, and return to the civilized life of the city.

With this end in view, therefore, he got into the stage, having no fear of its being stopped again on its route, and when it reached its destination went from there to the nearest railroad station, and proceeded to San Francisco, where he now lives as much a hermit as ever, but where he is rather more safe from robbers and similar dangers than in the Northwestern wilds.

As they went along, Harry asked Dan for a further explanation of the ball of fire which he had thrown at the outlaws and so terrified them.

"The case was of thin gelatine," he explained, "with a fine glass top, which I unscrewed as you saw. It contained explosive bombs, which only needed the heat to fire them off."

"But what did you put into it from the bottle?"

"Nitro-glycerine, to increase its explosive nature, and

also to keep up the heat. 'That stuff' will burn, you know, although it takes a blow to explode it."

"But what made it float in the air?"

"The gases generated by the friction, first by its rapid passage through the air, and afterwards by the different explosions. It was only like some of the rockets they have nowadays, which send out stars which float in the air for many minutes."

"But what started it to ignite in the first place? You didn't hit it, but only threw it into the air."

"I lit a fuse which you did not see, and besides that there was so much inflammable stuff inside, that its rapid passage through the air would be sufficient to cause an explosion. I lit the fuse so as to make more certain of its acting right."

"Well, I must say that it's a wonderful invention."

"And dangerous to handle. The heat of the hand might ignite it, or at least melt the outside covering, and spoil the whole thing. I had it wrapped up in paper, covered with fireproof material in order to prevent such a catastrophe beforehand."

"Have you any more of them?"

"Not here, for I wanted to be sure of that one first."

"Where did you get it?"

"From a chemist in Denver, and now you know all about it."

There was great need of their returning to the gulch in order to learn news of Allan, if possible, and they therefore determined to push on until dark, get an early start the next morning, and reach the place as soon as possible.

That evening, after they had halted, Dan, Harry, and Dick went out to reconnoiter the neighborhood, and while prowling about suddenly came upon a rough log cabin almost hidden among the rocks.

Had they not come upon it by accident they would not have suspected its existence, so cleverly was it hidden, a wreath of smoke curling up from a crevice between two bowlders, first giving them an idea of its being there.

It was some little time before they could get around to the front door, but this they at last did, when they saw by the light within and the shadows moving across the tattered shade that somebody was inside.

Creeping up under the window Dan lay still, and presently heard some one say:

"Tell you what, Dick Skimp, we might as well skip out of here, 'cause it's getting too hot."

"Why, that's the name of the Indian agent that Tom Griggs told me about," thought Dan. "Wonder who this fellow is?"

"D'ye think I'm afeard of a lot of boys, Black Ned? No, sircce. Dick Skimp ain't that sort. Besides, Wolf Heart the renegade puts too many good things in the way of business into my hands to make me want to get out."

"Ain't you afraid of gettin' the troops down on ye? Ye know there's that colonel ye murdered last fall and got his darter lugged off by the Injuns. If that was to come out now——"

"It won't, 'cause she's in with Wolf Heart's gang and can't get away. Besides, I'm going to marry her. She's a fine gal, on'y she's got too much spunk."

"You may find she has indeed some day if you don't light out."

"Why, what's weakenin' you? You used to be the bloodiest-minded cuss I ever see, and could cut a dozen throats afore breakfast without winkin'. I relied on you for lots of fat jobs in the way of deludin' huntin' parties and prospectin' gangs up inter my place, where we could bleed 'em at our ease."

"Well, I know I used to be a good hand for misleadin' these swell Britishers that come over here to hunt, 'cause I can look so innercent if I likes, and there's plenty that'll swear I'm the bulliest guide in the mountains."

"Then what in thunder is the matter? Why can't ye chip in and make money cuttin' throats and robbin' stages and sich like, same as you and me allus used to do?"

"Wall, I got skeered last night—I seen the devil come flyin' through the air all aflame and chuckin' powder and shot all around, and some of the fellers got hit. If it had been a shell I wouldn't ha' been frightened, but it follered us and went wherever we did, and kept shootin' out balls at us, an' I took that as a warnin' that I'd better quit business and go somewheres else."

"Who chucked the thing at ye?"

"Nobody. It was the old boy himself, I tell you. Young Denver Dan and his gang was around, to be sure; but they couldn't have raised the Old Nick like that."

"We'll get the gang together and wipe out the hull lot of 'em. They're nothin' but boys, and——"

Bang!

Click!

Whizz!

Crack!

The door was suddenly burst in with a loud crash, and three boys stood in the entrance.

The ominous click of three rifles was heard, and then the whizzing of bullets.

"Confessed murderers and outlaws, your time has come!"

The men drew their weapons and attempted to shoot, but ere they could raise a hand, a perfect rain of fire fell upon them.

They sank to the floor riddled with bullets, and the room now being full of flame and smoke, the woodwork having caught afire, the Deadshots retreated.

"That's the last of them," muttered Dan. "Thus perish all outlaws!"

CHAPTER XI.

THE DEATH OF THE RENEGADE.

AFTER the departure of the renegade Allan was left alone to think over the strange occurrences which had happened, and the distressing dilemma in which he was placed.

Here was his father, whom he had supposed dead, turned up again, and in the character of the worst of outlaws, men whom he had sworn to assist in exterminating.

Though the man was bad, he was Allan's father, and the latter could hardly feel himself bound to carry out his vow against him.

On the other hand he would never sacrifice Dan or his

comrades to the man's hatred, being resolved rather to die first.

And yet, brave as he was, this, too, seemed hard, when his life was so full of promise and so many opportunities lay before him, although his sense of duty plainly told him that if need be he must give up his life that right might prevail.

If it were a question of allowing the villain to escape on promise of leaving the country forever, or of returning to it at his own peril, he might have assisted the man making it right with Dan afterwards by a full explanation.

To sacrifice his friends, however, and aid and abet the man in his future villainies, was more than his sense of right would permit him to do, and rather than so debase himself, he resolved to face the worst, and sacrifice himself to principle.

He was left alone until morning, when soon after he awoke he was startled by the appearance of a lovely girl coming suddenly into the place.

She darted a quick glance around her, and then said, with the most perfect accent and in the sweetest tones, notwithstanding her evident excitement:

"Fear nothing. I will save you from this villain!"

"You are not an Indian girl, surely?" cried Allan in surprise.

"No, although they call me the Gazelle. I was stolen from my father, Colonel Van Nostrand, nearly two years ago, and carried away by the Indians, with whom I have since lived."

"But you do not wish to live with them always?"

"No, I have long been meditating revenge, and I have already advised your friends as to your whereabouts."

"They are coming to rescue me?"

"Yes, but they have left their camp, and I know not whither they have gone. I cannot think that they have abandoned you, but whether they have or not I mean to save you."

"And my—the leader here? What of him? Has he gone?"

"No, but many of his associates in crime have left, and it is whispered that your friends have shot them down."

"Ah, the Deadshots always make themselves feared."

"Be prepared for action at any moment, for I mean to save you—and have my revenge," she added half to herself, as she hurriedly left the place.

An hour afterwards the renegade entered in a great rage and said:

"Your rascally young comrades have been playing the very deuce with the men of my tribe and with my friends."

"You should not have such friends—outlaws and outcasts of every kind. Our band has sworn to exterminate all such, wherever we meet them."

"I will have revenge enough, never fear, for whenever I catch one of the young fiends I will have him tortured and his body, still quivering with life, thrown to the dogs."

"Villain!—I cannot call you father,—why will you not give up your evil life before it is too late?"

The man laughed, and then with an oath said:

"Are you ready to decoy Dan and his principal assistants into this place? I will show you the secret entrance."

"Never."

"Remember, it is your life or theirs."

"Then be it mine, for I am not base enough to betray my friends to such a villain as you."

"I am your father, and it is your duty to obey me blindly, no matter what I command."

"You have forfeited all claims to the title. You are as a stranger to me, and I refuse to do your bidding."

"Beware, for I——"

"I tell you I refuse!"

The renegade made a rush towards the brave boy, an uplifted tomahawk in his hand, his face distorted with rage, and his eyes gleaming forth rage and hatred.

Allan sprang back and looked about him for a weapon, but at that moment, when all seemed so desperate, there came a strange deliverance.

Suddenly he saw the hanging over the door pushed back, and saw the gleam of a rifle barrel thrust into the place.

Then there was a puff of smoke, and immediately afterwards a sharp report.

The renegade clapped his hands to his head, and fell forward upon his face, without a groan.

He had been shot in the head, and had died instantly, with all his crimes unpardoned.

Scarcely before the lad could realize it, the daughter of Colonel Van Nostrand leaped into the room, and seizing him by the hand, dragged him away, saying:

"Quick, there is no time to lose."

"Have you killed——"

"One of the murderers of my father, a miserable villain who was not fit to live. I have also saved your life."

Then she literally dragged Allan from the place, out into the open air, and across a little glade shut in by tall mountains.

"Make haste!" she cried, "the alarm has been given. Follow me and fear not!"

Then she dashed down a narrow path lined on either side by huge boulders until she came to a place where the road seemed to come to a sudden end.

Seizing Allan's hand, she dashed at the apparently solid rock, when to his surprise he found that it was merely a painted curtain which parted in the middle and allowed them to pass the gap, closing again behind them and concealing their strange means of exit.

In a few moments they came to a perpendicular wall of rock, but the young girl, pulling a concealed cord, brought down a rope ladder secured above, and in a twinkling she and Allan were at the top.

The Indians had closely followed, however, and by more than one route, so that as they reached the edge of the wood, they could hear yells and shouts all around them.

As they dashed out upon the plain, however, Allan suddenly uttered a joyful cry.

"Saved!"

Before him, and approaching rapidly, were Denver Dan, Jr., and all his band.

* * * * *

The Indians were completely routed and driven from their place of retreat, which, thereafter, was but the abode of wild animals.

The renegade was dead, and had paid the penalty of his

crimes, and Allan's hand was not stained with his father's blood.

Isabel, known as the Gazelle, the daughter of Colonel Van Nostrand, road away with the Deadshots, and Allan was constantly at her side.

He could not blame her for what she had done, and

the last I heard concerning them, was that they expected to be married when Allan was twenty-one.

Having accomplished the purpose for which they had left Denver, the Deadshots now set about returning, and thus ends the episode of DENVER DAN, JR., AND THE RENEGADE.

[THE END.]

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